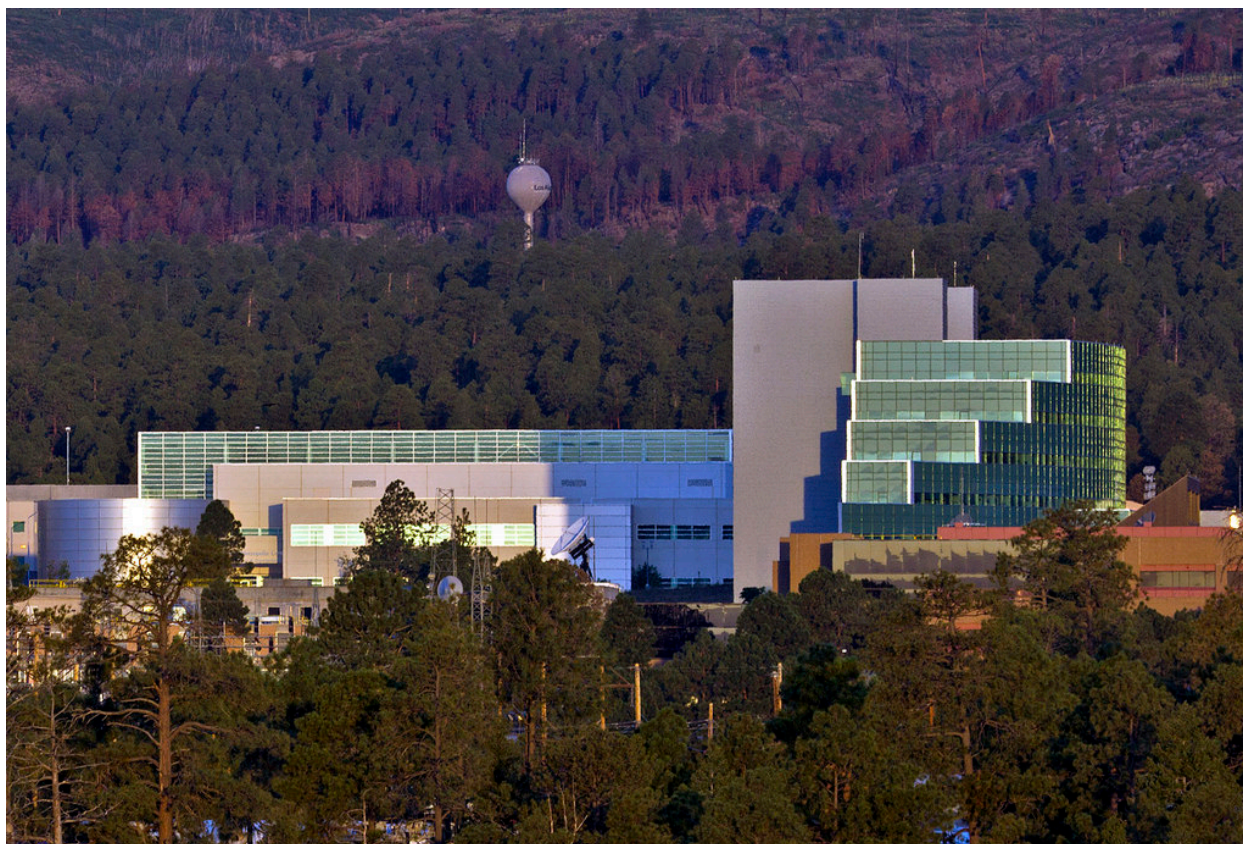




Laboratory disputes citizens' lawsuit

February 7, 2008



LANL in Compliance with Clean Water Act

LOS ALAMOS, NM, Feb. 7, 2008—Los Alamos National Laboratory officials today expressed surprise to a lawsuit alleging noncompliance with the federal Clean Water Act filed today by citizens groups against Los Alamos National Security LLC and the U.S. Department of Energy.

“The Laboratory is in compliance with its storm water permit under the federal Clean Water Act,” said Dick Watkins, associate director for Environment, Safety, Health and Quality. “The Laboratory takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously and we are firmly committed to protecting human health and the environment.”

Independently, the municipalities of Los Alamos and Santa Fe have certified the safety of their respective municipal drinking water supplies in annual water quality reports.

The Laboratory has been actively engaged with the Environmental Protection Agency in developing a new storm-water permit to be issued by EPA.

“During this process the Laboratory also met with these citizens’ groups, provided them an overview of our storm water program and a tour of a number of sites showing Laboratory storm water controls,” said Susan G. Stiger, associate director for Environmental Programs. “Rather than a lawsuit, we had hoped to continue our work with these groups along with the general public through the public permitting process.”

For more than a decade, the Laboratory has taken decisive action to understand and address the potential consequences of legacy operations. For example, the Laboratory has greatly reduced its wastewater outfalls from 141 to 17. The Laboratory plans to reduce its outfalls even further and is striving toward zero liquid discharge.

Additionally, the Laboratory operates a comprehensive storm-water monitoring network with more than 200 water-sampling locations. The Laboratory regularly reports sampling results to regulatory agencies and takes action to reduce or eliminate contaminate migration. These sampling data are also available to the public.

These citizens’ groups have raised assertions regarding PCBs. It was the Laboratory’s studies of the Rio Grande that first identified the presence of PCBs upstream and downstream of the Laboratory. The Laboratory demonstrated that PCB levels in the Rio Grande upstream of the Laboratory are comparable to PCB levels downstream. The studies also showed that the Laboratory’s contribution to PCBs in the Rio Grande is relatively minor compared to the widespread presence of PCBs in the Rio Grande. The Laboratory continues to take measures to further reduce PCBs.

For nearly 30 years, the Laboratory has sampled agricultural soils and crops irrigated with Rio Grande water downstream of the Laboratory for an exhaustive suite of potential contaminants. These studies have shown no impacts from Laboratory operations.

“The Laboratory is committed to meeting its environmental responsibilities,” said Stiger. “As residents of Northern New Mexico, we are committed to being good neighbors and environmental stewards.”

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Operated by Los Alamos National Security, LLC for the Department of Energy's NNSA

